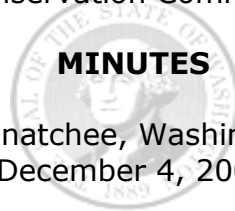


Approved at the January 15, 2009 Meeting

Washington State Conservation Commission Regular Meeting



Wenatchee, Washington
December 4, 2008

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/WSCC) met in regular session on December 4, 2008 in Wenatchee, Washington. Commission Chair Bill Boyum called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Bill Boyum, Chair
Lynn Bahrych, Vice Chair

Tracy Eriksen, Member
Jim Peters, Member
Dean Longrie, Member
Fred Colvin, Member
Lynn Brown, Member

COMMISSION STAFF

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Ron Shultz, Director of Policy & Intergovernmental Relations
Tom Salzer, Technical Services Manager
Debbie Becker, Financial Services Manager
Stu Trefry, Puget Sound Regional Manager
Ray Ledgerwood, Program Specialist
Lori Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

PARTNERS REPRESENTED DURING THIS MEETING:

John Larson, Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)
Don Larsen, Washington Department of Fish and wildlife
Rod Hamilton, USDA – Farm Service Agency
Kim Simpson, WADE President

GUESTS

Monty Mahan, Pierce Conservation District
Jason Schley
Sandy Cunningham, Asotin Conservation District

Additions/Corrections to Agenda Items

To accommodate presenter's schedules, the following items were moved on the agenda, Okanogan's request for local food market was moved up, and partnership reports were moved for when Roylene Rides-at-the-Door, State Conservationist, becomes available as well as the addition of the Nomination Committee. The time of the executive session was changed to noon.

Consent Agenda

Jim Peters moved and Lynn Bahrych seconded the motion to approve the September 18, 2008 Regular Business Meeting minutes and the October 20, 2008 Special Meeting minutes presented. Motion Carried.

Review and Thoughts of WACD

Chair Boyum opened discussion to the Commission members on their thoughts or comments on the week's events in Wenatchee. Jim Peters reflected on his first time attending the

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WACD conference many years ago. At that time, they had to do 75 resolutions opposed to the 23 resolutions they went through yesterday. He was impressed on the collaboration between the groups to quickly resolve as well as the format of how the resolutions were presented. Tom Salzer and Lynn Bahrych also agreed with the addition from Lynn on feedback she received from the districts complimenting the great work the Commission has been doing to work together. Ray Ledgerwood was impressed with the attendance at the "Role of Supervisors" Session. Lastly, Chair Boyum commented that districts really see the value of working with WACD and the working relationship with the commission.

District Boundaries

Asotin County CD: Clarification of district boundary –

Asotin County Conservation District presented to the commission their request for clarification of the district boundaries. The district would like the State Conservation Commission to duly redefine the boundaries of the Asotin County Conservation District. They would also like the Commission to determine such boundaries be entered as the official description of the territorial boundaries of the Asotin County Conservation District. In clarifying these boundaries, it will help the district work with landowners that would be eligible for their newly developed Small Acreage Farms Program in the more urbanized area of the county and will help them easily identify which properties lay within those District boundaries.

Fred Colvin moved and Dean Longrie seconded to approve the recommendation of the boundary adjustment. Motion Carried.

Legal Business

Pierce CD Investigation –

Mark Clark opened discussion about the Pierce Conservation District investigation. Stu Trefry stated that the information provided by Enduris will be forthcoming at the January Commission meeting.

Draft Policy on Removal of Supervisors –

Tom presented a draft policy on removing conservation district supervisors from office. RCW 89.08 gives the Conservation Commission the authority to remove supervisors for neglect of duty or malfeasance; however, we do not have good working definitions of those terms. Commission Members asked that more information be brought before the Commission in January.

Update on Mason Conservation District Lawsuit –

Tom updated the Commission.

OKANOGAN CD: REQUEST SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FOOD MARKET PROJECT

Okanogan Conservation District is looking to acquire a recently closed 29,000 sq. ft. grocery store in the Okanogan and convert it into a multiple use facility. The multiple use facility envisioned includes a smaller grocery store, USDA certified meat processing facility tied to a USDA certified mobile meat processing unit, a bakery/deli that local producers would be able to sell their goods which would include local fruits, grains, and other farm products, retail space for local artisans which will allow them to sell their goods in spaces they can lease to develop their customer base and gain exposure in a public facility as well as via the Internet. Success Metrics for this project:

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- Conduct specific Marketing assessment by March 31, 2009
- Secure grants and loans to purchase and remodel building by September 30, 2009
- Facility opens with 80% space leased by October 2009
- Facility fully leased by June 30, 2010

ACTION: Okanogan is seeking a letter of support from the Conservation Commission.

Lynn Bahrych moved and Tracy Eriksen seconded for the commission to write a letter of support for Okanogan's Local Food Market Project. Motion carried

ASSESSMENT UPDATES

Clark CD –

Hearing for the Clark County assessment will be December 16. The commission has requested the assistance of Whidbey Island CD to briefly release their consultant to help Clark CD on their economic benefits study.

Snohomish CD -

Snohomish- all paperwork has been turned in. Hearing held in October. County Council says they can pass it by the end of the year.

Fred asked if there were any other districts considering assessments. Stu replied that there are no other imminent ones at the moment. Island County/Whidbey Island may have one next year.

APPOINTMENTS

Tom Salzer reported that there are currently three midterm appointments available at this time.

Cowlitz CD -

Fred Colvin announced that James Scott is an applicant for the Cowlitz CD open position.

Fred moved that the Commission appoint James Scott to the Cowlitz CD board Dean Longrie Seconded the motion.

Tom announced that there is one other applicant and we should be expecting their application in shortly.

Lynn Brown moved to table the motion by Commissioner Colvin to delay this process to the January meeting to appoint these positions. The motion to table was seconded by Jim Peters. Motion carried.

Snohomish CD -

Fred Colvin also announced that Snohomish has an application from Mark Craven. The consensus of the Commission was to take up the Snohomish CD appointment at the January 2009 meeting.

Ferry CD –

Tracy Eriksen has two applications for Ferry Conservation District, Mark Faller and Patricia McKern. Tracy is a little more favored for appointing Patricia McKern as she is from the area and it would benefit the board and the community to have someone like her appointed.

Motion by Tracy seconded by Dean Longrie to appoint Patricia McKern to the Ferry CD board.

Discussion.

Lynn Brown moved to table the Ferry CD appointment to the Commission's January 2009 meeting, seconded by Fred Colvin. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Conservation Commission went into executive session at 12:05 pm for 20 minutes, for the purpose of discussing with counsel litigation to which the Commission may become a party, as allowed by RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). The Commission returned from executive session at 12:25 p.m.

MASON CD ASSESSMENT APPEAL

Lynn Bahrych moved and was seconded by Tracy Eriksen that the commission requests the Attorney General's office to prepare an amicus brief for WSCC in the Mason County case and to authorize the Executive Committee to work with the AG's office to protect the validity of current statewide assessments. Motion carried.

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

- WACD report by Dean Longrie: WACD just ended a very successful annual meeting. He was pleased with the collaboration of the partnerships that attended.
- WADE report by Kim Simpson: The WADE annual meeting will be in Leavenworth and they have started the planning process.
- WDFW, Don Larsen, agency is looking at \$30 to \$40 million shortfall due to the budget situation. Current Director has rescinded, agency will be going through some transitions.
- NRCS, Roylene Rides at the Door, stated they are currently working on two rules, AMA and the State Technical Team rules. Standard Operations will be out within the next 2 weeks. Farm Bill manuals are in draft at this point, however, hopes to have it final within the next couple of months. They are currently going through an audit to clean up their FY 08 files. Their deadline is December 31, 2008.

GRANTS

Pierce Conservation District Update -

Debbie Becker reported to the commission members that they have allocated \$75,000 of the \$100,000 funding to Pierce Conservation District. Monti Mahan, Pierce CD Manager, reported to the Commission that they have taken the necessary steps to improve their processes to spend the funding by the deadlines requested by the commission. He is seeking the commission's consideration to reward the additional \$25,000 expenditure to move forward on the projects that are in need of completion.

Fred Colvin moved and Lynn Brown seconded to allocate Pierce the additional \$25,000.

Discussion.

Dean Longrie moved to table the motion to the January Commission meeting, Lynn Bahrych seconded. Motion Carried.

POLICY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL REPORT

Policy for Cost Sharing for Employees & Associates

Ray Ledgerwood presented to the commission the Draft WSCC policy for Cost Share Participation by Conservation District Employees and Associate Supervisors. Ray presented four options to managers and Supervisors in eleven sensing interviews conducted while developing the draft policy. The draft policy was then sent to all district managers, commission members and staff to review and comment upon. Ray received only nine comments on the draft policy he sent for review.

Agency Transitions

There is a lot of change going on at the state level regarding Natural Resource. Ron Shultz gave a brief overview of these changes to the Commission. The Department of Fish and Wildlife director has resigned. The Department of Natural Resources has a new commissioner, Peter Goldmark. Melodie Selby was just announced Deputy Director for the Water Quality Program at the Department of Ecology.

Biodiversity council- Ron Shultz

Council has proposed legislation to be permanently established within the Recreation Conservation Office. Inside the bill there is language regarding WSCC.

"The council shall work with the Washington State Conservation Commission established under RCW 89.08.030 on how to utilize the strong statewide network of conservation districts and landowners to promote and implement the council's landowner incentive and assistance strategy, public education strategy and other pertinent strategies."

There are members of the Biodiversity Council that feel that because of the current budget climate we are not in a position to create a new agency.

Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) 2020 Action Agenda

The Final PSP 2020 Action Agenda was released December 1, 2008. WSCC submitted comments to the Partnership. The action agenda identifies necessary actions and near terms actions, Ron identified to the commission some of the actions that were mentioned in the Action Agenda that the WSCC and Districts are lead on. PSP proposal is seeking to boost spending by \$200 million; this is over the current \$400 million. They characterized the spending as an economic stimulus and are hoping to get additional \$50 million from Federal stimulus spending.

Funding options they are considering includes creating a special purpose taxing district.

Puget Sound District Action Agenda

Ron shared with the Commission a draft of the Puget Sound district Caucus Action Agenda. This document will link the work of the districts with the threats and actions identified in the PSP 2020 Action Agenda. A final document will be completed in early January.

09-11 Budget and Legislative Session

The Commission reviewed the potential issues for the upcoming legislative session. Legislative committee membership was discussed.

The Commission has submitted their budget to OFM and will not hear back on this until the Governor's budget is released.

Agency Request Legislation –

Commission members reviewed the latest draft of the proposed agency request legislation. The draft varied from previous versions with the removal of language that would give authority to the Commission to acquire or hold an interest in property.

Tracy Eriksen moved for the commission to proceed with the request legislation and Lynn Bahrych seconded. Motion carried

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN NORTHWEST IN AGRICULTURE

Mark Clark presented on behalf of Lee Faulconer and Department of Agriculture a newly formed program to address energy related risks to Northwest producers that involve a unique group of agencies and experts to form the Energy Efficiency in Northwest Agriculture (EENA) project. This Interdisciplinary team offers new tools to help regional producers address energy efficiency challenges. The EENA project will deliver:

- On-line energy self-assessment software tools, adapted to northwest agricultural systems, to help producers assess their energy use and identify their best energy efficiency opportunities.
- Whole-farm energy planning training for public and private sector personnel, including producers, Conservation District staff, Extension personnel and commodity groups.
- An effective infrastructure of trained energy planner to help producers take advantage of federal, state and local cost share opportunities to implement energy efficiency improvements.
- Documentation of cost savings, energy savings, and environmental benefits resulting from the EENA project.

Tracy Eriksen moved to approve the executive committee to have the authority to write a letter to the Department of Agriculture to support this program seconded by Lynn Bahrych. Motion carried.

PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Lincoln CRM Update- Mark and Ron had a meeting with Jay Manning, Director of Ecology regarding the CRM process and a recent letter sent by Ecology to Lincoln

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CD regarding utilizing their approved Best Management Practices (BMPs). Communication will continue with Ecology and EPA to come up with a solution to try and be more effective and efficient in site specific areas.

Update on Planning Process- Ray Ledgerwood provided an update on the conservation planning protocol being developed for use by conservation districts. The protocol is based on the NRCS nine step planning process, existing tools, technical guides and templates. The draft briefing paper will be distributed to district managers in the next few weeks for comment. He is planning to meet with agencies and organizations in January.

OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION

In order to allow for the proper time that will be needed for the Commission's review of the Office of Farmland Preservation's recommendations, Mark Clark recommended this item be revisited at the January Commission meeting, Commissioners agreed.

REGIONAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Stu Trefry reported that the regional managers are in the process of creating a new 20 to 30 page manual with critical subjects that the new district supervisors can utilize by hard copy and an online version for district managers that will include important links.

Commission Operations

- 2009 Commission schedule with dates and locations are presented in the packet.
- Commission Budget Update: the conservation commission is having their audit the week of December 8th.

Chair Boyum recommends that the executive group get together after December 20th to discuss the outcome of the budget announced.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Tracy Eriksen moved that Lynn Bahrych be appointed Chairwoman and Fred Colvin as Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Dean Longrie seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Lynn Brown would like to cast a unanimous ballot.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

The next Commission Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19, 2008 in Lacey, Washington.

The Conservation Commission meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.